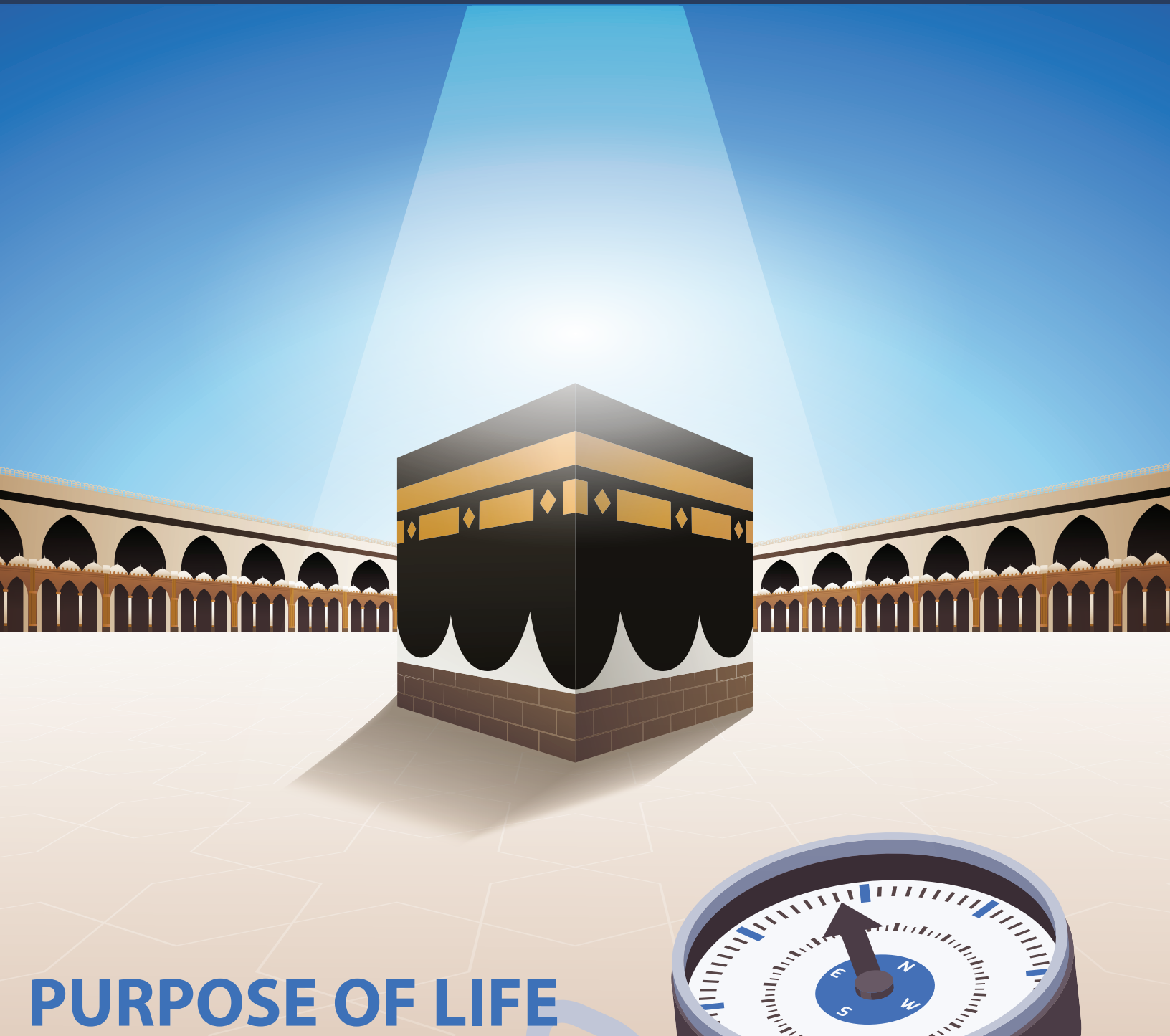


In the Latter Days, the sun shall rise from the West (The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa))



PURPOSE OF LIFE

Conditions of Bai'at & Responsibilities of an Ahmadi
Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad,
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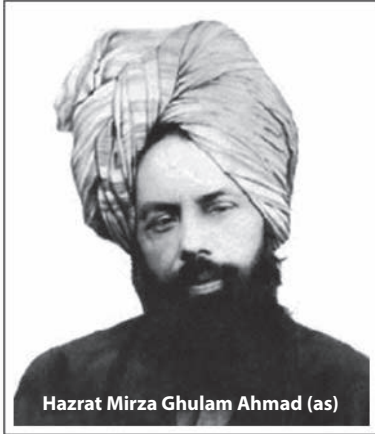
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The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community



Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as)



AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM COMMUNITY

United States of America

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious organization, international in its scope, with branches in Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Australia, and Europe. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) (1835-1908) in Qadian, a small and remote village in the Punjab province of India. He claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days, the Awaited One of the world community of religions (the Mahdi and Messiah).

The Movement he started is an embodiment of the benevolent message of Islam: peace, universal brotherhood, and submission to the Will of God in its pristine purity.

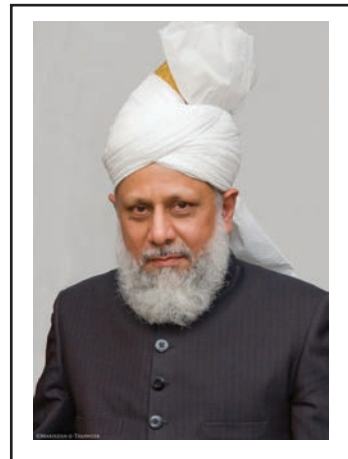
Hazrat Ahmad (as) proclaimed in the commentary of the Verse 6 of Chapter 98 of the Holy Qur'an: "[Islam] is the religion of the people of the right path." The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was created under divine guidance with the objective to rejuvenate Islamic moral and spiritual values. It encourages interfaith dialogue, diligently defends Islam and tries to correct misunderstandings about Islam in the West. It advocates peace, tolerance, love and understanding among followers of different faiths. It firmly believes in and acts upon the Qura'nic teaching:

"There is no compulsion in religion" (The Holy Qur'an: 2:257).

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community strongly rejects violence and terrorism in any form and for any reason.

The Community has been led by the elected successors of Hazrat Ahmad (as). The present Head of the Community, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, was elected in 2003. His official title is Khalifatul-Masih V or Fifth Successor of the Promised Messiah (as).

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Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad,
Khalifatul-Masih V (aba)

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The Muslim Sunrise

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In 1920, the first Muslim missionary, Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq (ra), arrived in America. In 1921, he founded the Muslim Sunrise, which stands today as the longest-running Muslim publication in America. The magazine seeks to open discussions on Islam and topics related to religion in general. It highlights the role of Islam in an ever-changing global society and provides a platform for public opinion on contemporary issues while presenting solutions from an Islamic perspective.

The *Muslim Sunrise* welcomes letters to the Editor, questions, and submissions.

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Muslims follow the name of God's prophets with the prayer '*Alaihis-Salam* or '*may peace be upon him*,' and for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, *Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam* or '*may peace and blessings of God be upon him*.' Companions of prophets and righteous personalities who have passed away are saluted by *Radiyallahu 'Anhu/a* or '*may God be pleased with him/her*.' While such salutations sometimes are not set out in the text in order to facilitate reading, we encourage readers to offer these prayers as if set out in full.

Acronyms for salutations used in this publication

- sa: Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam
(peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)
- as: 'Alaihis-Salam (may peace be upon him)
- ra: Radiyallahu 'Anhu/'Anha (may Allah be pleased with him/her)
- rh: Rahimahullahu Ta'ala (may Allah shower His mercy on him)
- aba: Ayyadahullahu Ta'ala Bi-Nasrihil-'Aziz
(may Allah support him with His mighty help)

Verse numbers in the references from the Holy Qur'an count "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful" at the beginning of a chapter as the first verse.

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FROM THE HOLY QUR'AN

And I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me.

The Holy Qur'an (51:57)

Did you then think that We had created you without purpose, and that you would not be brought back to Us?

The Holy Qur'an (23:116)

Say, 'We will adopt the religion of Allah; and who is better than Allah in teaching religion, and Him alone do we worship.'

The Holy Qur'an (2:139)

Whoso acts righteously, whether male or female, and is a believer, We will surely grant him a pure life; and We will surely bestow on such their reward according to the best of their works.

The Holy Qur'an (16:98)

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا
لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٧﴾

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ
إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾

صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ صِبْغَةً
وَنَحْنُ لَهُ عَابِدُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾

مَنْ عَمِلْ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنشَىٰ وَهُوَ
مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ
أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾

SAYING OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (sa)

'Abdur-Rahman bin Abi-Bakrah narrated
from his father that a man said: "O Messenger of Allah! Which of the people is
the best?" He said: "He whose life is long and his deeds are good."

He said: "Then which of the people is the worst?"

He said: "He whose life is long and his deeds are bad."

Jami` at-Tirmidhi 2330

(In-book reference: Book 36, Hadith 27;

English translation: Vol. 4, Book 10, Hadith 2330)



EDITORIAL

OCTOBER 2022

Unlike many of us, Queen Elizabeth II (1926-2022) was not on a mission to ask what her purpose in life was. She was made acutely aware of it early in her life. To her eternal credit, she resolved to make her perception of the purpose of life shine through in everything she did, guided by her faith as well as by the values she embodied — decency, deep spiritual devotion, unflagging duty, unwavering loyalty and kindness to family and country, and joyful love of nature.

For the majority of us not born with hereditary obligations of monarchy, who come into this world simply, as willed by God, and who will depart without fanfare, also according to His will, an essential question that philosophers, theologians, social scientists, and countless others have attempted to answer is “What is the Purpose of Life?”

All life must have a purpose. For most of God’s animal and plant creation, purpose means survival and propagation. But for we humans, living with a purpose to life can acquire different meanings: success in worldly pursuits and professions, success in maintaining optimum physical and mental health, success in academic endeavors or in competitive sports, success in loving relationships—the list is endless.

One aspect less mentioned is that human beings can reach the pinnacle of spiritual success through striving to achieve Divine communion with God. Indeed, all the efforts listed above can be utilized purposefully to seek God and the ways to please Him through inclusion of service to humanity.

When humans intend to win the love of God, no effort of theirs is ever wasted or left unnoticed. Fortunate are those who have found God, for they have contentment in their hearts and peace in their minds (1).

This is, in fact, the foundation of the Islamic purpose of life for which humans are created. In this issue, we present the Islamic perspective on the true purpose of life. Your feedback is always welcome.



Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian,
The Promised Messiah and Mahdi (as)

References:

1. Farhan Iqbal & Shahrukh Rizwan Abid, “The Quest of a Curious Muslim,” P. 146, First Edition 2019, Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya Canada. <https://www.alislam.org/book/quest-of-curious-muslim/what-is-purpose-of-life/> [Accessed: September 19, 2022]

IN THE WORDS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH(as)

The Purpose of Creation

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad,
The Promised Messiah and Mahdi (as)

Though different people, on account of their shortsightedness or lack of courage, appoint various types of objectives for their lives and stop short at worldly purposes and desires, yet the purpose that God Almighty has specified in His Holy Word is: "I have created jinn and men so that they should recognize and worship Me" (1).

According to this verse the true purpose of human life is the worship and understanding of God Almighty and devotion to Him. Only the Creator can enjoin the Purpose of Life. It is obvious that it is not open to man that he should himself lay down the purpose of his life by his own authority inasmuch as man does not arrive in the world of his own will, nor will he depart from this world of his own will. He is a created being and He Who created him and bestowed upon him better and higher faculties than those bestowed upon other animates, has enjoined a purpose for his life. Whether anyone comprehends that purpose or not, without doubt the purpose of man's creation is the worship and understanding of God Almighty and to lose himself in Him (2).

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an: "Verily, We offered the trust of the Divine Law to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it and were afraid of it. But man bore it. Indeed, he is capable of being unjust to, and neglectful of himself" (3).

This means that the Divine Trust, by which is meant the love of God and complete obedience to Him even in the face of hardship, was offered to the angels and the whole of creation and the mountains, all apparently full of strength, but they all refused to undertake it, being afraid of its grandeur. But man undertook it for he possessed two qualities, that he could force himself in the cause of God Almighty and could advance so far in love of Him as to forget altogether everything else (4).

The Three Objects of Life

The real purpose of all the external and internal limbs and faculties that have been bestowed on man is understanding and worship and love of God. That is why, despite a thousand occupations, man does not find his true well-being except in God Almighty. Having acquired great wealth, or achieved high office, or having become a great merchant, or having acquired governing authority, or become a great philosopher, he departs in the end from these worldly involvements with a sense of frustration. His heart rebukes him all the time about his deep concern with the world and his conscience never approves his wiles and deceits and wrongful actions. This problem can be appreciated in another way. The purpose of the creation of a thing is determined by its highest achievement beyond which its faculties cannot rise. For instance, the highest a bullock is capable of is ploughing, or irrigation, or transportation, and therefore these are the purpose of its life and it cannot rise above them. But when we take stock of man's faculties and powers to discover his highest capacity, we find that he is invested with the faculty of seeking after God so much so that he desires that he should become so devoted to God's love that he should have nothing of his own and that everything should become God's. He shares his natural needs like food and drink and rest with other animates, and in industry some animals are ahead of him; for instance, the bees produce such excellent honey from every type of flower that man has so far not been able to compete with them. It is clear, therefore, that the highest capacity of man is meeting with God Almighty and thus the true purpose of his life is that the window of his heart should open towards God (5).

Reference:

1. The Holy Qur'an (51:57)
2. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Essence of Islam II, p. 461, Edition: 2004, Islam International Publications, Ltd.
3. The Holy Qur'an (33:73)
4. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Essence of Islam II, p. 462, Edition: 2004, Islam International Publications, Ltd.
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Conditions of Bai'at & Responsibilities of an Ahmadi

by Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad,
Khalifatul-Masih V (aba)



Observe Five Daily Prayers

The first point mentioned in this condition (1) is that the initiate will observe five daily Prayers in accordance with the commandment of Allah and His Messenger (sa). The commandment of Allah is that men and women as well as children who have reached the age of ten should offer Prayers at their appointed times. Men have been commanded to establish five daily Prayers in congregation, to visit the mosques and inhabit them, and to search for the Grace of Allah. There is no concession in the matter of five daily Prayers. In cases of travel or sickness, some of the requirements have been made lenient, for instance combining Prayers or reducing the number of rak'at. The fact that only during sickness one is permitted not to go to mosque to join Prayers shows the importance of Prayer in congregation. I will read some excerpts, but I wish to stress that everyone who takes the pledge should ponder that whereas we are making a pledge to sell ourselves, are we obeying this explicit commandment of the Holy Qur'an? Every Ahmadi has the duty to remind himself. You should examine yourself, and watch your own actions. If we all start examining ourselves, a great revolution can be achieved. In the Holy Qur'an Allah says:

And observe Prayer and give the Zakat, and obey the Messenger, that you may be shown mercy (2).

In surah Ta Ha, verse fifteen it is commanded:

'Verily, I am Allah; there is no God beside Me. So serve Me, and observe Prayer for My remembrance.' (3)

There are numerous other verses in the Holy Qur'an about establishing Prayer. I will now present one hadith. Hadrat Jabir (ra) relates that he heard the Holy Prophet (sa) say that, 'Neglecting to offer Prayer brings a man closer to apostasy and disbelief.' (Sahih Muslim, Kitab-ul-Iman, Babu Bayanit-laqismil-Kufri 'Ala man Tarkas-Salah)

The Holy Prophet (sa) has said, 'The comfort of my eye is in the Prayer.' (Sunan Al-Nasa'i, Kitabu 'Ishratin-Nisa'i, Babu Hubbin-Nisa'i)

Hadrat Abu Hurairah (ra) narrates that the Holy Prophet (sa) said, 'The first thing for which a person would be called to account is the Prayer. If he succeeds in this account, he would be successful and will attain salvation. If that account is deficient, he will be ruined and will be a loser. If there is a shortfall in the obligatory Prayers, Allah will make it up from his nawafil. Similarly, all his other deeds will be accounted for.' (Sunan-ut-Tirmadhi, Kitab-us-Salati, Babu Inna Awwala ma Yuhasabu bihil 'Abdu...)

Then it is said in a hadith:

Hadrat Abu Hurairah (ra) has related that he heard the Holy Prophet (sa) saying, 'Tell me if one of you had a stream running at his door and he should take a bath in it five times every day, would any dirt be left upon him?' He was answered, 'No dirt would be left on him.' The Holy Prophet (sa) observed, 'This is the case of the five Prayers. Allah wipes out all faults in consequence of them.' (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Kitabu Mawaqitis-Salati, Babus-Salatil Khamsi Kaffaratun Lil Khata'i)

The Promised Messiah (as) says:

Offer the Prayer. Offer the Prayer. That is the key to all good fortune. (Izala-e-'Auham, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 3, p. 549/First edition, p. 829)

He also says: The essence and spirit of Prayer lie in supplications. (Ayyamus-Sulh, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 14, p. 241)

He also says:

So all ye people who count yourselves as members of my Jama'at, in heaven you shall be counted members of my following only when you truly begin to advance on the paths of righteousness. Offer your five daily Obligatory Prayers with such concentration and awe of mind as though you were seeing God in front of you. Observe the days of fasting for the sake of God in full sincerity. All among you who are liable for Zakat should never fail to discharge this important obligation. And those upon whom the pilgrimage to Mecca has become obligatory, without any obstacles standing in the way, should duly undertake that blessed journey. Do all good deeds with the proper care they deserve, forsaking evil from a real repulsion arising from the heart. Be very sure that no action, whatsoever, can take you to God if it is devoid of righteousness. The root of everything good is taqwa [righteousness]; in whatever action this root is not lost, that action will never be devoid or futile. (Kashti-e-Nuh, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 19, p. 15)

The Promised Messiah (as) says:

What is the Prayer? It is the supplication made humbly in the form of tasbih [glorification] and tahmid [praise of God], taqdis [proclaiming His holiness], istighfar [seeking His forgiveness] and durud [calling down His blessings on the Holy Prophet (sa)]. When you are occupied with the Prayer, do not confine yourselves only to the prescribed Prayers like heedless people whose Prayer is all formality and has no reality behind it. When you observe the Prayer, besides the prescribed supplications taught by the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet, you should set forth your supplications in your respective vernaculars so that your hearts may be moved by your humility and your earnestness. (Kashti-e-Nuh, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 19, pp. 68–69)

The Promised Messiah (as) further says:

The Prayer is so powerful that the heavens incline towards the human with it. The one who does full justice to Prayers

feels that he has died; his soul has melted and fallen at the threshold of Allah... A house in which Prayer is offered in this manner will never face destruction. It is said in hadith that if Prayer had been ordained to the people of Noah, they would not have been ruined. Hajj is obligatory but with certain prerequisites; so is fasting and Zakat. But the obligation to offer Prayer has no prerequisites. All other obligations are discharged once a year, but the Prayer is ordained five times a day. As long as the Prayer is not performed in accordance with all its requirements, it does not earn the blessings that it carries. Such allegiance [without discharging these obligations] in not of any benefit. (Malfuzat, new edition, vol. 3, p. 627)

The Promised Messiah (as) says:

Prayer is obligatory on every Muslim. It is narrated in hadith that some people accepted Islam and submitted, 'O Prophet of Allah, please release us from the obligation of Prayer because we are traders. Because we tend to cattle, sometimes we are not sure about the cleanliness of our clothes. Moreover, we do not have the time.' The Holy Prophet (sa) said, 'Take heed, if there is no Prayer, there is nothing. Faith without worship is no faith at all.'

What is Prayer? To submit your weaknesses before God and to seek their solutions from Him. At times, to stand straight before him in awe of His Grandeur—ready to carry out His commands. At times, to prostrate before Him in complete submission. To beg from him all that you need. That is Prayer. To praise Him like a beggar, to move His Mercy by narrating His Greatness and Grandeur, and then asking. A 'faith' that does not have this [type of Prayer] is no faith at all.

A man is needy at all times to seek Allah's pleasure and beg for His Grace. Only through His Grace can we accomplish anything. O Allah, grant us the ability to belong entirely to You to stay firmly upon the path of Your pleasure and thereby earn Your pleasure. Prayer means love of God, fear of God, to always keep Him in mind—and that is what faith is.

So anyone who wants to be freed from the obligation of Prayer cannot accomplish anything more than the animals—eating, drinking, and sleeping. This certainly is not faith. This is the way of the disbelievers. The popular saying, 'The moment of heedlessness is the moment of disbelief' is undoubtedly true and correct.' (Al-Hakam, vol. 7, March 31, 1903, p. 8)

How to achieve concentration in Prayer? The Promised Messiah (as) says [that a person who derives no pleasure

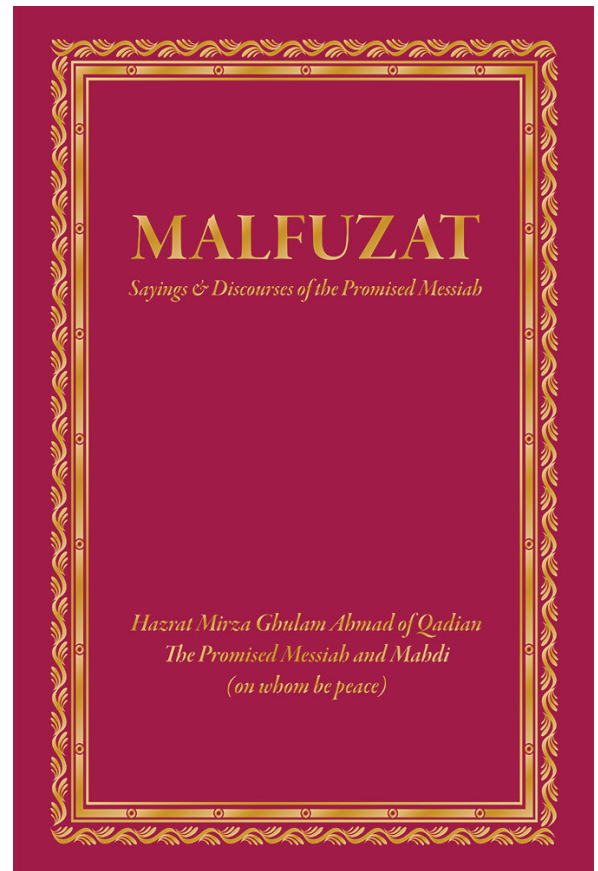
from Prayer should beg before Allah]:

Allah the Almighty! Thou knowest how blind and sightless I am, and at the moment I am like the dead. I know that in a little while I shall be called and shall present myself before Thee and no one will be able to stop me. But my heart is blind and unenlightened. Do Thou cause to descend upon it such a flame of light that thereby it may be inspired with Thy love and devotion. Do Thou bestow upon me such grace that I shall not be raised up sightless and blind. When he supplicates in this manner and persists in the supplication, he will see that a time will arrive when something will descend upon him while he is engaged in such a Prayer that will melt his heart. (Malfuzat, new edition, vol. 2, p. 616)

Reference:

This article is taken from "Conditions of Bai'at & Responsibilities of an Ahmadi" by Mirza Masroor Ahmad. Pages 51-57. Edition: 2006, Islam International Publications Ltd.

1. Mirza Masroor Ahmad, "Conditions of Bai'at & Responsibilities of an Ahmadi", Condition III.
2. The Holy Qur'an (24:57)
3. The Holy Qur'an (20:15)



How to Achieve the Purpose of Life (1)

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian
The Promised Messiah (as)

The question is how and through what means can man achieve this purpose?

First Means

Let it be clear that the principal means for achieving this purpose is the correct recognition of and faith in the True God. If this first step is wrongly taken and a person sets up a bird, or an animal, or any of the elements, or a human being as his god, it cannot be expected that his subsequent steps would be taken along the straight path. The True God helps His seekers; but that which is dead cannot help the dead. Allah the Glorious has illustrated this point beautifully in this verse: "Unto Him is the true prayer. And those on whom they call beside Him answer them not at all, except as he is answered who stretches forth his two hands toward water that it may reach his mouth, but it reaches it not. And the prayer of the disbelievers is but a thing wasted" (2). Worthy of worship alone is the same true God Who is Omnipotent. Those on whom they call for help beside Him, do not respond to them at all. Their case is like that of one who stretches forth

his hands towards water and ask it to enter his mouth. But will it come do so? Not at all. Thus, all the prayers of those who are not cognizant of the True God are futile.

Second Means

The second means of achieving the true purpose of life is to become aware of the perfect beauty of God Almighty, for beauty is something which naturally attracts the hearts and generates love. The beauty of God Almighty is His Unity and His Greatness and His other attributes, as the Holy Qur'an says: "Say, He is Allah, the One; Allah, the Independent and Besought of all. He begets not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him" (3).

This means that, in His Being and His attributes and His Glory, God is One without associate. All are dependent upon Him and every particle derives its life from Him. He is the Source of grace for everything and receives no grace from anything. He is neither a son nor a father for none is equal to Him.

The Holy Qur'an repeatedly draws attention to God's perfection and greatness and points out that such God is the Besought of all hearts and not one who is dead or weak or lacks mercy or power.

Third Means

The third means of achieving the purpose of life is to become aware of the benevolence of God Almighty for love is generated by beauty and benevolence. The benevolent attributes of God Almighty are set forth briefly in the Surah Fatihah, where it is said: "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds, The Gracious, the Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgment" (4).

All praise belongs to Allah alone, Lord of all the worlds, The Gracious, the Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgment.

It is obvious that the perfection of benevolence consists in that God Almighty created His servants from nothing and thereafter His Providence was bestowed upon them and He became the support of everything, and all types of His mercy were manifested for His servants. His benevolence is without limit and beyond count as is repeatedly set forth in the Holy Qur'an, as, for instance:

If you try to number the bounties of Allah, you will certainly not be able to count them.

Fourth Means

The fourth means of achieving the true purpose is Prayer, as is said:

You pray and I shall accept your prayer (5).

There is repeated urge towards Prayer, so that man should achieve his purpose not through his own power, but through God's power.

Fifth Means

The fifth means of achieving the purpose of life is striving in the cause of Allah with one's property and one's faculties and one's life and one's reason, as He says:

Dedicate in the path of Allah your possessions, your lives, and your selves to their fullest capacity (6).

And devote to the Divine cause all that you have been granted by God including reason, knowledge, understanding and skill (7).

And those who strive after Us in every way, We guide them along the paths that lead to Us (8).

Sixth Means

The sixth means for achieving the purpose of life is steadfastness; that is to say, that a seeker should not become tired and should not be daunted by trials, as Allah the Exalted says:

On them who affirm: Our Lord is Allah; and then remain steadfast, angels descend, re-assuring them: Fear not, nor grieve, and rejoice in the Garden that you were promised. We are your friends in this life and in the hereafter (9).

This is an indication that the pleasure of God Almighty is won through steadfastness. It is true that steadfastness is more than a miracle. Perfect steadfastness is that one should find oneself surrounded on all sides by calamities and one should find one's life and honor in danger and nothing comforting should be available, so much so, that God Almighty should stop—by way of trials—the comforting visions and dreams and revelation and should leave one in the midst of terrifying fears, but that at such a time, one should not abandon courage and should not step back like a coward and should not let one's fidelity be weakened. One's sincerity and loyalty should not be shaken, one should be pleased with the humiliation, one should be reconciled to death, one should not await the support of a friend, one should not seek glad tidings from God, because of one's delicate situation, and one should stand up straight despite helplessness and weakness and the lack of every comfort. One should stretch forth one's neck, saying: Whatever is to happen, let it happen; one should face courageously whatever has been determined and one should not be impatient nor complain till the trial is over. This is the steadfastness the reward of which is God. This is the quality by virtue of which the dust of Messengers, Prophets, Siddiqs and martyrs is still so fragrant. This is indicated by the Glorious God in the prayer:

O Allah! show us the path of steadfastness by treading along which one wins Thy bounties and favors and Thou art pleased (10).

This is also indicated in another verse:

Lord: at this time of trial send down upon our hearts the comfort that should make us steadfast and do Thou so ordain that we should die in a state of submission to Thee (11).

At the time of trials and misfortune, God Almighty causes a light to descend upon the hearts of those who are dear to Him, being strengthened by which they face misfortunes calmly and, out of the sweetness of their faith,

they kiss the chains that are put round their feet in His cause. When calamities descend upon a man of God and signs of death appear, he does not contend with his Lord that He might be safeguarded against them, inasmuch as to persist at such a time in supplications for security amounts to fighting God Almighty and is contrary to complete submission. A true lover advances forward at a time of calamity and holding life as nothing, and saying goodbye to love of it, submits himself completely to the will of his Lord and seeks only His pleasure. Concerning such people, God the Glorious says:

And of men there is he who would sell himself to seek the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is Compassionate to His servants (12).

It means that the man of God dedicates his life in the path of God and, in return, earns the pleasure of Allah. These are the people who receive the special mercy of Allah.

In short, this indeed is the spirit of the steadfastness which we have described and which leads to the God. Let him who wills, grasp this point.

Seventh Means

The seventh means of achieving the purpose of life is keeping company with the righteous and to follow their example. One of the needs of the advent of Prophets is that man naturally seeks a perfect example, for it fosters eagerness and resolve. He who does not follow a good example becomes slothful and goes astray. This is indicated by Allah the Glorious in the verses:

Keep company with the righteous (13). Adopt the path of those on whom Allah's favors have been bestowed before you (14).

Eighth Means

The eighth means of achieving the purpose of life are pure visions and dreams and revelation from God Almighty. To travel towards God is to tread upon a very delicate path which is attended by diverse types of calamities and sufferings. It is possible that a person may be overtaken by forgetfulness in pursuing this unfamiliar path or may give up hope and should abandon further advance. Therefore, the mercy of God Almighty seeks to comfort him in his progress in this journey and strengthen his heart and to uphold his resolve and to increase his eagerness. Thus it is God's way that from time to time he comforts those who are voyaging along this path with His revelation and manifests to them that He is with them. Thus strengthened, they perform this journey with great

eagerness. He has said:

For them are glad tidings in the present life and also in the hereafter (15).

There are several other means for achieving the purpose of life which the Holy Qur'an has set out (16), but considerations of space prevent us from setting them out here.

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How to be Successful in Achieving the Life Goal

Shehla Ahmad

“And everyone has a goal which dominates him; vie, then, with one another in good works” (1). These words from the Holy Qur’an are a guiding light for all of us. This verse reminds us that every sensible human being can live a purposeful life. Further, once a life goal is identified, it is very important that we must make the appropriate and sincere effort to achieve the goal. Otherwise, we shall fail. Therefore, healthy competition among believers in fulfilling our ultimate goal is helpful motivation.

God has, in clear words, told us the purpose of our creation. Allah states, “I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me” (2). This verse makes it easy to prioritize our life goals, describing the purpose of our creation, which is to worship God through words, actions, and conduct. When a person offers prayers, that individual is striving to achieve the purpose of life through one form of worship. Similarly, when someone serves humanity, the individual is also working towards the goal of life, which is to please God and to connect with Him.

One may wonder how pleasing God can result in achieving worldly success or if worldly goals are worth pursuing. Success in worldly goals will automatically come from connecting with God and strengthening our relationship with Him. Allah states, “Surely; success does come to the believers” (3). The question of how one can develop such a relationship with God may also arise; the answer to this question has already been provided by God Almighty. He states: “And whoso obeys Allah and His Messenger, shall surely attain a mighty success” (4).

God has linked the glad tidings of success with obedience to God and to the Prophet Muhammad (sa). As believers, we are blessed that we have a role model to follow in the person of the Prophet Muhammad (sa): “And whoso obeys Allah and His Messenger, and fears Allah, and takes Him as a shield for protection, it is they who will be successful” (5).

The Holy Qur’an, as a book of complete guidance, has provided us with the “dos and don’ts” of life to make it easier to choose the path of success. Purifying our souls by avoiding the “don’ts” and beautifying our souls with that which is good leads to success. “So fear Allah as best you can, and listen, and obey, and spend in His cause; it will be good for yourselves.

And whoso is rid of the covetousness of his own soul — it is such who shall be successful” (6).

One of the golden principles mentioned in the Holy Qur’an as a rule for success is to give preference to faith over all material objects or personal relations. Anything that takes us away from God Almighty hinders our success in life. Therefore, Almighty Allah admonishes the believer and states, “Thou wilt not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day loving those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though they be their fathers, or their sons or their brethren, or their kindred. These are those in whose hearts Allah has inscribed true faith and whom He has strengthened with inspiration from Himself. And He will make them enter Gardens through which streams flow. Therein will they abide. Allah is well pleased with them, and they are well pleased with Him. They are Allah’s party. Hearken ye O people! It is Allah’s party who will be successful” (7).

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) was a living example of the Holy Qur’an. He is reported to have said: “Allah The Almighty has laid down certain obligations: do not disregard them. He has set certain limits: do not transgress them. He has forbidden certain things: do not go near them. He has kept silent about some other things, out of kindness to you, not because of forgetfulness: so do not make unnecessary inquiries regarding them” (8).

The words of the Prophet Muhammad (sa) are full of profound wisdom inspired by Divine light. He made it clear that at every step in our life, to succeed, we must ensure our hearts and intentions are pure and in line with the goals we have set for our life. The Prophet Muhammad (sa) said, “It has been made clear what is lawful and what is forbidden. In between the two, certain things are undefined: most people do not know which category they belong to. Whoever keeps away from them safeguards his faith and his honor. Whoever steps into the doubtful is likely to have stepped into the forbidden area. He is like a shepherd who lets his flock graze around a forbidden area, while there is every danger that the flock may stray into it. Remember that every sovereign has a forbidden area. The forbidden area of Allah comprises the things He has prohibited. Beware! There is an organ in the body; as long as it remains healthy, the entire body remains healthy. The moment it becomes diseased, the entire body

will become diseased. Remember that this organ is the heart” (9).

In his book, ‘The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam’, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), has addressed the question “The Object of Man’s Life and the Means of its Attainment” at length. He states: “It is obvious that man is not in a position to appoint the purpose of his own life, for he does not come into the world of his own accord, nor will he depart therefrom of his own will. He is a creature, and the One Who created him and invested him with better and higher faculties than all other animals has also appointed a purpose for his life. Whether anyone penetrates to it or not, the purpose of man’s creation without a doubt is the worship and the understanding of God and complete devotion to Him” (10).

No matter how much we strive to obtain material goals, our hearts find true contentment in God. Since Allah has created us with exceptional competence and longing to know Him, pursuing Him is also in line with our physical creation. The Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), said: “The highest reach of man’s faculties is to meet God, the Exalted. Thus the true purpose of his life is that the window of his heart should open towards God” (11).

The Promised Messiah (as) has mentioned eight means to achieve the goal of life in the book “The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam,” which are paraphrased in the following few paragraphs. The original text is available on the pages referenced (10).

The first step is to get to know the Creator and have correct understanding of Him. One cannot reach the destination unless one has a correct understanding of that goal.

The second method to achieve the purpose of life is to get to know the attributes of God and be familiar with His beauty, as this knowledge creates an attraction that leads toward God.

The third means of success is through gaining knowledge of God’s beneficence and benevolence. God has created humans out of nothing, and He provides for everything. This realization is essential in getting to know Him and pursuing Him.

The fourth means of achieving our life purpose is supplicating before Him. When we pray to God, we tap into His Divine powers as He listens to and fulfills our requests.

The fifth means of achieving the purpose of life is spending in the way of Allah. When we sacrifice and strive in His way with

our life, wealth, time, and faculties, we find Him and His pleasure.

The sixth means of achieving the purpose of life is steadfastness in His way. No misfortune or disgrace should prevent a believer from advancing on the path to finding God; instead, those setbacks should make our steps forward.

The seventh means of achieving success in life is spending time in the company of the righteous. For this purpose, prophets are sent to be our role models.

Humans are weak, and they may get dejected and lose hope in the face of trials. Therefore, Allah has provided true dreams and visions as a means to achieve the purpose of life. Such dreams reassure God’s existence and provide comfort in the face of trials, so man does not go astray. This is the eighth means described by the Promised Messiah (as).

With the knowledge and true understanding of our goal and also of the path that leads to it, let us strive and pray in these words: “Our Lord, grant us good in this world as well as good in the world to come, and protect us from the torment of the Fire” (12).

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Theory of Evolution from the Ahmadiyya Perspective

Fazal Masood Malik

Islam is the only religion that provides a profound and detailed discussion of the evolution of the Universe and our perspective of humanity. Allah the Almighty informs us that He has "created man in the best make" (1). As Muslims, we firmly believe that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) was the reason for the creation of the Universe (2) and everything in it (3). The Ahmadiyya-Islamic viewpoint on evolution supports the evolutionary nature of everything in our Universe. Besides this viewpoint, there exist various theories on evolution. One such theory presents an evolution that came by chance. However, the time required to develop a fully functional human being with all active faculties (eyes, hands, etc.) is far greater than the entire life of the Universe, presenting an infinite probability factor. Another model presented by various faith groups is based on stories of yesteryear and offers no proof of how life was created and how the supporting systems, such as water, mountains, or air, came to be. Islam presents a model that not only supports intelligent design but also provides details of how each phase of development came about. It caters to purposeful design, as evident from numerous verses of the Holy Qur'an (4).

Theory of Evolution and Chance

Charles Darwin hypothesized that small, random changes in plants and animals build up over generations, leading to variation within and across species. He discussed his findings in his 1859 book "On the Origin of Species." In "Descent of Man" and "Selection in Relation to Sex," Darwin later applied this idea to human beings (5).

Darwin proposed that the environment chooses those species most likely to survive and procreate. This process is known as Natural Selection. The theory suggests that in this process, the species produce more offspring than can survive, given their environment. Those who are the strongest not only survive but can reproduce. Others who lack fitness and strength, die. This process is also commonly known as "Survival of the Fittest."

Because the adept species are more likely to pass on their qualities to their progeny, the population continues to evolve.

Three assumptions lead to Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection:

1. Individuals within species can differ.
2. Some differences can be inherited; and
3. Individuals that reproduce the most are those with the most advantageous characteristics.

The idea that differences within species are transmitted down through organisms' genetic code, making the progeny of better-suited individual plants or animals more likely to survive, was put out by scientists in the 1940s; up until then, the theory remained essentially unchanged (6).

Today, there are many opposing views to Darwin's theory of evolution, or Darwinism, as it is commonly known. One such challenge is presented by organisms known as archaea. Unknown to exist before 1977, this group of organisms was thought to be bacteria. However, genome sequencing confirmed that archaea are not bacteria. Archaea are phylogenetically closer to eukarya (7).

Islamic Theory of Evolution

Islam presents a model of evolution that points toward purposeful guidance rather than a model based on chance. Based on the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), has taught us that guided evolution is part of the progressive design of God (8). The Holy Qur'an draws the attention of thoughtful persons toward the evolutionary process (9). It decisively points towards guided evolution, stating: "Our Lord is He Who gave unto everything its proper form and then guided it to its proper function" (10).

These verses describe God creating man from a single organism, bringing forth the fruits of the Earth through rain, and creating and guiding all life on Earth. Then, considering the order of creation, the Holy Qur'an discusses the creation of the known Universe in 6 stages (11). After that, it goes into further details, talking about the origin of the Universe from a singularity (12), then the expansion of the Universe (13), then the creation of the orbital motion of celestial bodies, the relation of the orbits to the creation of night and day (14);

finally discussing the gravity as an invisible force binding the Universe (15).

Comparing the description of the creation of the Universe to the life cycle that we know very well today, being the birth of a child, we find that similarities abound.

It is of absolute awe that we learn of human birth from a book revealed over 1400 years ago. One can read about the start of humans from a drop of sperm (16); how sperm is carefully placed in a depository for human creation (17); then the various stages of the creation of the human fetus, being the ears, the eyes, the heart (18) and finally, the measures taken to protect the fetus, which lies inside three layers, being abdominal, uterine and amniotic (19, 20). The Holy Qur'an repeatedly invites us to reflect upon its teachings, encouraging us to consider the patterns or stages of evolution.

Holy Qur'an on Adam

The Holy Qur'an discusses the human evolution process. It affirms that Adam was not the first man created but the first prophet (21).

In 1908, shortly before the demise of the Promised Messiah (as), Clement Wragge, a British-Australian scientist, visited the Promised Messiah (as) in Qadian. On one of the two occasions that he visited, he asked about Adam. "It is written in the Bible that Adam, or say the first man, was born in Jeehoon ... can we deduce that all mankind is descendent of the same Adam?" Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) replied: "We do not follow the Biblical belief that the world began with the birth of Adam six or seven thousand years ago and that nothing existed before, and God was idle. Nor do we believe that all humanity descended from the same Adam." The Promised Messiah (as) continued to explain: "We believe that Adam was not the first man. Humanity existed even before him, as is written in the Holy Qur'an, where Allah says to Adam: 'I am about to place a Khalifa in the earth' (22). As a Khalifa or Successor is placed among a group of people as a representative, placing a successor meant that humankind existed before Adam and that Adam was to be placed as a representative of the Most High Almighty God (23).

Final word

In conclusion, the understanding of Ahmadi Muslims about the critical message of evolution according to Islamic teachings is that every creation since the inception of our Universe has been guided by wisdom and reason. A cursory glance at evolutionary stages will reveal that no species has been able to maintain command over another, except for humans. Therefore, the creation of every organic life on Earth appears to circle around the service of humankind, benefiting

humanity. Humans, however, have been charged with the singular purpose of learning about and getting to know the one true Creator and of worshiping Him.

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Emptiness Begets Emptiness, A Critical Approach to Nihilism

Aasim Ahmad

The American political atmosphere since its independence has regressively moved towards increasing conflict and polarization. Only our First President, Washington, truly grasped the requirement of unity to ensure the success of a nation when he voiced opposition to the concept of a bi-partisan system. Washington commented that a bi-partisan system would drive the nation apart, abandoning the real needs of the whole in favor of that which benefits only a part. However, neither Washington nor anyone else could have imagined the ultimate result of this irrational, divisive, selfish, blind chasing of power against the needs of the nation. Worse than civil war, which is already a part of our past, the ultimate result, which we are now experiencing, is the degradation and elimination of values and morals in society. It is the literal dismantling of our social fabric, which will herald the end of whatever peace is left today and our National prestige. It is the adoption of Nihilism, or emptiness, or the acceptance of life as a meaningless enterprise that has established itself in our societies. Nihilism is the unweaving of social peace and stability.

The existential philosophers of the 19th and 20th centuries foretold the inevitability of Nihilism. Foremost among these philosophers certainly was the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche commented: "Every belief, every considering something true is necessarily false because there is simply no true world" (1). Nietzsche also famously stated that "God is dead," declaring the Nihilistic rejection of religious values and structure.

Nihilism rejects all ethical and divinely instituted morals in exchange for personal desire and belief. Only in such a mental state is it possible, for example, that one can declare gender as a choice. Facts do not exist for the Nihilist either, as objective truth is thrown into doubt and disbelief. Thus, one can only accept as truth what one desires to accept. There is no longer a goal to achieve or any standard of existence. The individual ultimately decides all these things for himself or decides nothing. This is indeed no way to live and represents a rejection of the human psyche or the physical nature of human existence. If a man ventures into an isolated psychological world where the only truth belongs to oneself, it is simply impossible to live socially and within an established civilization. Thus, the ability to live in a Civilized society is put at risk as Nihilism thrives. It can also be said that

Nihilism is a pathway to anarchy where not even a government can be established. Effectively anything requiring any type of unity or, as Rousseau would say, a Social Contract would be impossible.

The truly frightening reality for the United States is that, although we may suspect the liberal factions of our society to drift into such a chaotic mindset, it has also seeped into the conservative factions. In the past weeks, the former Director of the CIA under the Bush Administration has declared that the Republican party is more "nihilistic and dangerous" than terror groups (2). Thus, the reality is this nation is losing its grip on the fabric that holds societies together. Indeed, morality and the acceptance of divine structure keep society woven together.

The only answer to such divisive and irrational psychology is unity. It is, in fact, the same thing preached by our very first President, George Washington. There is only one belief system practiced worldwide, literally defined as unity. That system is Islam. True Islam is the antidote to Nihilism. Nihilism is a sickness leading to despair and emptiness. Whereas one falls into an empty and despairing world with Nihilism, Islam provides the ultimate unifying system of truth satisfactory for all people. Islam provides a means to bring people from various backgrounds into its fold simply by being the literal unifying religion of all previously revealed religions like Hinduism, Judaism/Christianity, Confucianism, and all the native traditions of the seven continents. It is the perfected system of all past religious systems. Islam repairs and perfects the damage done to those systems. All of this begins with the declaration that God is One.

Nihilism, however, directly conflicts with the idea of God and the Oneness of God. Singularity is the definition of unity. Unity is in the fabric of our nation as we believe in the concept of "E Pluribus Unum" or "Out of Many One." God says in the Qur'an: "And hold fast, all together, by the rope of Allah and be not divided; and remember the favour of Allah which He bestowed upon you when you were enemies and He united your hearts in love, so that by His grace you became as brothers; and you were on the brink of a pit of fire and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah explain to you His commandments that you may be guided" (3).

There is a clear distinction between the ones who remain unified and those who are not. The Rope of Allah is a clear metaphor describing how the people who accept the beautiful system of the divine and submit to God are as unified as the fibers of a rope. It is as if every step a person makes in the way of God increasingly tightens that fiber weaving it over and over. As hundreds and thousands of fibers join in, the rope becomes stronger and stronger until it is virtually impossible to sever. However, the ones favoring their systems or, in the case of Nihilism, the lack thereof, are sitting on the "brink of a pit of fire." This fire pit is the equivalent of the emptiness and despair faced by Nihilistic tendencies. Moreover, God explains how this unity, granted by being close to God, brings love and tenderness between people. This is undoubtedly the foundational requirement of Civilization.

Our reality today is that both Nihilism and violence are mutually on the rise, almost compounding each other's growth. However, it is most certainly a direct and natural result of rejecting the existence of God and a lack of faith. If society wishes for peace again, it cannot remain ignorant of the beauty of Islam. Islam is the final fortress of peace for the world. If Civilization wishes to overcome this slow dismantling of its fibers, loosening, as it were, the rope that binds it together, then it must return to God sincerely and wholeheartedly.

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Is Man Really Condemned to be Free?

A Critical Approach to Existentialism

Iffat Mirza

When asked about the differences between deterministic schools of thought and existentialist schools of thought, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh), fourth successor to the Promised Messiah (as), advised that Islam promotes the middle path between these two (1). He also wrote in his book, *An Elementary Study of Islam*: “The issue of destiny is a very complicated one, which has been debated through the ages by philosophers and divines alike. In almost every religion there is some reference to the nature of destiny. We can divide those who believe in destiny into two major categories. Those with the commonly held blind belief in destiny portray it as predetermination by God of everything big and small. [...] The other view is that of free choice, with destiny playing practically no role in whatever man decides and executes” (2).

Evidently, these two age-old ideas present two extremes: one with no freedom and one with perhaps a little too much to the point where one must create meaning for oneself out of nothing.

Indeed, in all things, Islam is a religion that promotes balance or the middle path. Chapter 31, verse 20 of the Holy Qur’an states “And walk thou at a moderate pace and lower thy voice” (3); The fact that Qur’anic teaching goes to these lengths to explain that we should adopt moderation even in the way we walk and talk, shows the importance of this middle path in all aspects of life. Thus, we see in God’s creation the concept of measure, balance, or justice has been inscribed into its very existence, and ideally, this is something human beings should look to adopt in their lives.

It sounds fairly straightforward to be able to adopt ‘balance’ in material or quantifiable objects. But what about our very outlook on the world? Or indeed, our understanding of ourselves as human beings, including questions of where we come from and for what purpose we came.

To return to the question posed to Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (rh), this is a most useful framework, which is to approach life on the middle path, to understand not only the purpose of life but how to practically live one’s life towards this purpose. Life throws many things at us, the good and the bad. In doing so, it is easy to subscribe to an extreme way of looking at the nature of life, because life itself can be extreme, at least in our perception of it.

For the purposes of this essay, I must focus on one singular branch of existential thought: that of the 20th Century French philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre. As Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (rh) wrote: ‘Among other atheist philosophers, Sartre (1905–1980) is perhaps the most interesting and playful. He knows how to coin simple phrases with profound ideas’ (4). The phrase Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (rh) particularly reminds us of is perhaps Sartre’s most famous saying: “Man is condemned to be free.”

Allow us to unpack this for a moment: Sartre’s philosophy of Existentialism considers existence to always come first. It is after existence is established that meaning can come to it, that is, man is born, and it is through his life that he must find meaning. At first glance this is even an optimistic take on life: as humans, we will create our own meaning. But the issue, for Sartre, is that the freedom to choose in a godless universe leaves us in agony; and, as Hazrat Khalifatul-Masih IV (rh) states, all that is left is “the agony of the soul.” There is nothing to guide us through this freedom, no direction nor anyone to rectify. What results is a state of paralysis, not unlike that which Antoine Roquentin, the protagonist of Sartre’s brilliant novel *Nausea* (1938), experiences. In the journalistic novel, one entry on a Tuesday is simply “Nothing Existed” (5). Another expresses “I should so like to let myself go, to forget, to sleep. But I can’t. I’m suffocating; existence is penetrating me all over” (6).

No part of this sort of existence seems particularly desirable, and indeed, the first glance of optimism that the word “freedom” offers is no longer valid. Like poor Antoine, we become suffocated by our own inability to comprehend our existence.

Such suffocation can only be expected from a theory that provides no justification or direction of existence. Equally, one can expect despondency from any theory which tells us that we have no freedom, for which reason once again, we must return to the idea of the middle path. While on the one hand, we have little to no free will and find ourselves in the chains of destiny decided; on the other, we find ourselves in the chains of the endlessness of choice. The Holy Qur’an states “Only those can accept who listen. And as for the dead, Allah will raise them to life, then to Him shall they be brought back. And they say, ‘Why has not a Sign been sent down to

him from his Lord?" Say, 'Surely, Allah has power to send down a Sign, but most of them do not know' (7). It is made clear here, that God has shown us signs; that is, the emptiness of freedom is negated because there is guidance, but indeed there is also free will. One must choose to follow the guidance. "Those who listen," that is, who seek guidance, will accept God's signs and indeed will not find themselves in a state of suffocation that comes with an unjustified existence, as Sartre would have it. Further, the Holy Qur'an stipulates the idea of reward and punishment in reference to one's free will. Stating "Allah burdens not any soul beyond its capacity. It shall have the reward it earns, and it shall get the punishment it incurs" (8), shows us clearly that in the Islamic doctrine, one's own choices are essential in determining our consequences.

However, what is redeemable about Sartre's Existentialism, and perhaps leads it away from turning back towards Nihilism, is that it ultimately requires man to bravely push on. To evade these moments of anguish by not confronting the freedom we face is to live in "bad faith,"

and indeed, not recommended (9). The ultimate goal is for meaning to be created. It is a shame that there is no way to know if the meaning created is indeed meaningful. With such a lack of guidance, one cannot be blamed, then, for living life in 'bad faith.' It may be cowardly, but the anguish and depth of human frustration are a great burden to bear. While Islamic doctrine would hold the idea that the purpose of human existence has been revealed, for Sartre 'no revelation descends from on high, whatever rises, rises from the depth of human frustration.' Of course, for Muslims, this purpose has been revealed in the form of the Holy Qur'an and through the teachings of the Holy Prophet (sa), which is to ultimately worship God. God tells man: "And I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me" (10). Here, in his exegesis of the Holy Qur'an, Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, Khalifatul-Masih II (ra) explains: "[Worship] is to subject oneself to a rigorous spiritual discipline, working with all one's inherent powers and capacities to their fullest scope, in perfect harmony with and in obedience to God's design, to receive the Divine impress and thus be able to manifest in oneself God's attributes" (11).

According to a Hadith of the Holy Prophet (sa), it is narrated: "The earth has been made for me a place of worship and a means of purification" (12). This shows us that the purpose of existence and the creation of this world for man is to spend his time in it in the worship of God and in pursuit of a pure way of life. It is a means for us to find God.

God's very existence is the source of guidance for man. It is through aiming to 'manifest in oneself God's attributes' that our existence can come to be meaningful. Through His Divine Attributes, encompassing Compassion, Beauty, Love, Grace, and Mercy, among countless more, there is no question of how to create meaning in our lives. Thus, God's existence justifies man's existence. Man is indeed lost without recognizing God's existence.

The great Sufi thinker and Wali-Ullah of the 13th Century, Ibn Arabi, recognized the importance of man's relationship with the Divine attributes by teaching that God has inscribed His attributes into the human soul and it is through the remembrance of God that these will come forth. Cultivating these within our own being justifies our existence (13).

While Sartre's philosophy leads man to stare at the infiniteness of freedom in a state of anguish where there is no justification for existence, Islam teaches the infiniteness of God's attributes through which the anguish is not only resolved but in its place resides comfort.

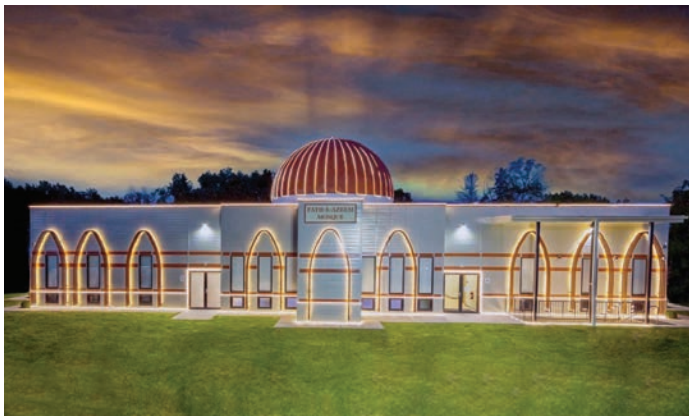
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NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS

Prayer over Prejudice: A Great Victory Commemorated in Zion, Illinois

On September 27, 2022, His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad, World Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and Fifth Successor of its Holy Founder, inaugurated the Fath-e-Azeem Mosque in Zion City, Illinois.



TrueIslamUSA
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This historic event holds great meaning for Ahmadi Muslims and serves as a sign of the truthfulness of the Promised Messiah, His Holiness Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be on him). Exactly 120 years ago, in September 1902, Ahmad's voice reached the young American city of Zion, Illinois, when he penned an open letter to Dr. John Alexander Dowie, founder of Zion City, in response to Dowie's prayers for Islam's destruction.

Dowie (1847-1907) was a Scottish faith healer who gained fame and fortune during the 1895 World's Fair in Chicago, outside of which he had set up a tabernacle and

performed healings for visitors. The following year he founded a church and quickly gained more than 100,000 followers. He announced he was sent by God to "smash every other church in existence" and pave the way for the return of Jesus Christ.

In succession, Dowie claimed to be the Messenger of the Covenant, the prophet Elijah, and the first apostle of his Christian Catholic Apostolic Church.

Along the way, Dowie abused every other denomination – Baptists, Methodists, Mormons, Catholics, all were "apostates" – as well as Judaism and Islam. His invective against Islam was particularly virulent, calling the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) a "forger" and "false prophet," announcing that "Islam must go" and praying for its destruction repeatedly.

The Promised Messiah, ever the champion of Islam and true and ardent devotee and defender of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him), took up his pen in the defense of Islam, writing:

"As regards the Muhammadans, we hope Dr. Dowie will renounce his claim upon all if the decision can be come to by an easier method. Whether the God of Muhammadans or the God of Dowie is the true God may be settled without the loss of millions of lives which Dr. Dowie's prediction would involve. That method is that, without threatening the Muhammadan public in general with destruction, he should choose me as his opponent and pray to God that of us two whoever is the liar may perish first."

The Review of Religions, September 1907

At the time of this challenge, Dowie was at the peak of his life: founder and absolute ruler of a church with more than 100,000 followers; head of a new, fast-growing theocratic city wherein he held personal ownership of all residential and commercial property in his own name; and a world-renowned faith healer who was himself the picture of perfect health. Dowie's estimated net worth exceeded \$800 million in today's dollars.

Dowie acknowledged the challenge and responded by taunting Ahmad: "There is a Muhammadan Messiah in India who has repeatedly written to me . . . and people ask me why I do not answer him. Do you imagine that I shall reply to such gnats and flies? If I were to put down my foot on them I would crush out their lives."

Leaves of Healing, 27 December 1902

After being challenged by Ahmad to this prayer duel for God to distinguish the truthful from the liar, Dowie met with a series of magnificent failures.

In October 1903, Dowie undertook a costly campaign with 3,000 followers to convert New York. Standing before thousands in Madison Square Garden, he abruptly lost his voice. When he was able to speak, he descended into vulgarity. The trip was a costly failure.



Full-Page Newspaper ads in Chicago Tribune, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, and Daily Herald convey a victory of prayers over prejudice

Zion suffered a financial crisis. Dowie's personal account became overdrawn by \$600,000 – more than \$20 million in today's dollars. The following year, Dowie ordered his followers to liquidate their assets and deposit their money into his bank or face expulsion for failing to do so.

In September 1905, the world-renowned faith healer who claimed that ill health visits only the sinful, suffered a paralytic stroke.

In April 1906, his hand-picked successor, John Voliva, along with church and city leadership, suspended Dowie from office, citing his "extravagance, hypocrisy,

misrepresentations, exaggerations, misuse of investment, tyranny, injustice" and "other grave charges." Dowie suffered a second stroke in 1906. His wife Jane and son Gladstone, the only remaining members of his family, left his side due to public and private indiscretions.

On February 20, 1907, the Promised Messiah published an announcement that God promises to show a great sign of his truthfulness in the coming days.

"God has informed me: I will reveal a fresh sign which will be a great victory. This will be a sign for the whole world. The sign will be at the Hand of God and everyone should wait for it. God will manifest this sign shortly. It will be evidence of divine help. It will be in testimony of this humble being who is being abused by all. Blessed is he, who hearkens this sign."

On March 9, 1907, paralyzed on one side, unable to walk, penniless and destitute, abandoned by his wife and son, ousted by his own church and the city he founded by his hand-picked successor, John Alexander Dowie died in Zion — just as it had been foretold by His Holiness Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be on him).

The city's first built mosque is aptly named "Fath-e-Azeem" (mean "great victory"), which symbolizes and commemorates that great victory – of prayer over prejudice, of truth over falsehood – that took place in 1907.

After his death, Dowie's church dropped "Apostolic" from its name and moved on without its founder. It would take Zion much longer to recover from Dowie's mismanagement, but it eventually did. And today, Ahmadi Muslims, whose motto is "love for all, hatred for none," proudly call Zion home and have been serving the city in individual and collective capacities for decades. Zion's motto is "historic past, dynamic future," and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is proud to be a part of that bright future.

Reference:

<https://trueislam.com/prayer-over-prejudice-a-great-victory-commemorated-in-zion-illinois/>

Poetry CORNER



The Purpose of Life

Thou hast all the power and might, O God,
By finding Thee we gained all our purpose.

Every lover takes on an idol,
In our heart, this Beloved has made home.

He is the peace of mind and heart's desire,
The same Whom we call "Lord of all the Worlds".

He manifested unto me with support and bounties,
Holy is He Who has confounded my foes.

My soul is attached with that Beloved,
He is the Paradise and the Abode of Peace.

Where is the strength in me to talk of Him?
There is this mighty stream of love a flow!

What blessings Thine are these, O Guide of mine!
Holy is He Who has confounded my foes.

There is no paucity of favours Thine,
No moment there is ever free of them.

The bounties and benevolence are countless,
I have no strength for gratitude a-now.

What blessings Thine are these, O Guide of mine,
Holy is He Who has confounded my foes.

Through which paths should I come to Thy lane?
What is the service through which I find Thee?

It is the love through which I may be drawn,
It is with godliness that I abase my ego.

To whom shall I tell of this thing that is love?
Unto whom do I state the secret of fidelity?

How can I now conceal this windstorm?
All I can do is blow my own dust to the winds!

What have we got to do with the worldly life?
Holy is He Who has confounded my foes.

If someone attaches his heart with that Pure One,
He must cleanse himself before he finds Him.

Only he, who dies, joins the living ones,
'Tis only he who is scorched who revives the dead.

This fruit is far away for a stranger to eat,
You must reach high, for it does not descend.

It's hidden below layers upon layers; who shall find it?
Only him who is lost in love who finds this Pearl,

Who effaces his self and shows mercy,
To whom ego and pride do not suit at all.

O God, Thou hast bestowed this wealth upon me,
Holy is He Who has confounded my foes.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, "Precious Pearls," English translation of
Durr-e Sameen (Urdu) by Waheed Ahmad, pp 54-55,



Questions & Answers



Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian,
The Promised Messiah and Mahdi (as)

What is the true purpose of life?

The true purpose of human life is the worship and understanding of God Almighty and devotion to Him. It is obvious that it is not open to man that he should himself appoint the purpose of his life by his own authority inasmuch as man does not arrive in the world of his own will, nor will he depart from this world of his own will. He is a created being and He Who created him and bestowed upon him better and higher faculties than those bestowed upon other animates, has appointed a purpose for his life. Whether anyone comprehends that purpose or not, without doubt the purpose of man's creation is the worship and understanding of God Almighty and to lose himself in Him.

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AHMADIYYA MOSQUES IN THE USA

AZ – Phoenix - (Bait-ul-Aman Mosque)

2035 W Elliot Rd, Chandler, AZ 85224-1717

AZ – Tucson - (Yusuf Mosques)

1111 N Queen Ave, Tucson, AZ 85705-7320

CA – Bay Point - (Dar-us-Salaam Mosque)

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CA – Los Angeles (Chino) - (Bait-ul-Hameed Mosque)

11941 Ramona Ave, Chino, CA 91710-1661

CA – Los Angeles (Hawthorne) - (Bait-us-Salaam Mosque)

13221 Prairie Ave, Hawthorne, CA 90250-6107

CA – Los Angeles (Pico Rivera) - (Ahmadiyya Mosque)

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CA – Silicon Valley - (Bait-ul-Baseer Mosque)

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25510 State Route 53, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137-7176

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2700 Lewis Ave, Zion, IL 60099

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MI – Detroit - (Bait-ul-Muzaffar Mosque - to be rebuilt),

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NC – Charlotte - (Mosque Charlotte)

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OH – Columbus - (Bait-un-Nasir Mosque)

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OH – Dayton - (Fazl-i-Umar Mosque)

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PA – Pittsburgh - (Al-Noor Mosque)

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PA – York - (Ahmadiyya Mosque)

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TX – Austin - (Bait-ul-Muqheet Mosque)

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Bait-uz-Zafar Mosque – Queens NY



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Bait-ul-Ahad Mosque – Cleveland OH



Bait-un-Nasir Mosque – Columbus OH

10 Conditions of Bai'at (Initiation)



On December 1st, 1888, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, published an announcement that God had ordained him that whomsoever sought true faith and piety, should pledge allegiance to him so that Allah may shower His mercy and beneficence on them.

- 1** That till the last day of his life, he shall abstain from *shirk* (associating any partners with Allah).
- 2** That he shall keep away from falsehood, cruelty, adultery, dishonesty, disorder, rebellion and every kind of evil.
- 3** That he shall offer prayers (*Salat*) five times daily.
- 4** That he shall not inflict injury on any of Allah's creatures.
- 5** That he shall bear every hardship for the sake of Allah.
- 6** That he shall not follow vulgar customs, and shall guard against evil inclinations.
- 7** That he shall discard pride and haughtiness, live in humility & meekness
- 8** That he shall hold his faith, dignity, and the welfare of Islam dearer than his own life, wealth and children.
- 9** That he shall have sympathy for all of God's creatures, and devote his talents to their welfare.
- 10** That he shall establish brotherhood with him (i.e., Ahmad), obeying him in all good things, and firmly adhere to these rules until the last breath of his life.

The list provided here gives an overview and abbreviated version of the Ten Conditions of the Bai'at. Please see the full text of the Ten Conditions of Bai'at at: <https://www.alislam.org/articles/conditions-initiation-baiat/>

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